



City of Cleveland
Frank G. Jackson, Mayor

Department of Public Health
Office of the Director
75 Erieview Plaza, 2nd Floor
Cleveland, Ohio 44114-1839
216/664-6790 • Fax: 216/664-2197
www.cleveland-oh.gov

August 5, 2016

The Honorable Secretary Sylvia Burwell
Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Burwell,

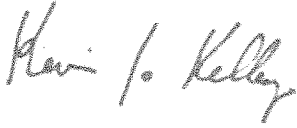
We jointly, Kevin Kelley, President of Cleveland City Council, and Merle Gordon, Director of the Cleveland Department of Public Health hereby submit this letter in opposition to the Healthy Ohio 1115 Demonstration Waiver. We petition the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, with oversight authority, to consider opposing it as well based on the impact of reliable access to care, disruption of eligibility, and jeopardizing the public health.

The City of Cleveland is home to over 392,000 residents and has approximately 61,000 Medicaid recipients. Nearly one-third of people in Ohio's Medicaid program are non-elderly adults without disabilities, a group that would be affected by the implementation of Healthy Ohio 1115 Medicaid Waiver. The Cleveland Department of Public Health has worked alongside numerous organizations and efforts to increase access to care and address issues of health disparities. We believe the proposed Healthy Ohio 1115 Medicaid Waiver will negatively impact all these efforts.

One of the provisions of utmost concern is that Ohio would offer no protection to individuals losing coverage due to domestic violence, disaster declaration or medical frailty. Mothers would not be exempt after delivery of their child, potentially creating interruptions in care and coverage during the critical first year of life which, without appropriate post-natal care, could contribute to the already alarmingly high rate of infant mortality in Ohio. In addition, this lockout provision would negatively impact access to coordinated care which is necessary for individuals with chronic conditions.

In 2014, Ohio expanded Medicaid, allowing adults with household income up to 133% of FPL, children with household incomes up to 206% of FPL and pregnant women with household incomes up to 200% to become eligible for Medicaid. Almost half of the 650,000 Ohioans enrolled in expanded Medicaid are employed, but their wages are low and their employers do not offer benefits. These people struggle daily to feed their families, pay for housing, get to and from work often working long hours or multiple jobs. Under Healthy Ohio, they would be required to pay monthly premiums, a percentage of their income, and be subjected to a number of confusing expectations. We are concerned that their inability to pay premiums would force people to drop out of the program and back into an uninsured status either resorting to emergency rooms or foregoing care entirely. The State of Ohio currently estimates that at least 133,000 people will opt out if this plan is implemented.

The proposed Healthy Ohio Program has the potential to negatively impact the public health of individuals, families and communities. Our mission is to protect the health of the residents of the City of Cleveland including the most vulnerable; the implications of Healthy Ohio will cause them to suffer immeasurably. Please consider denying the Healthy Ohio 1115 Medicaid Waiver to protect the health of all the residents of city of Cleveland and the state of Ohio.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kevin J. Kelley".

Kevin J. Kelley, President
Cleveland City Council

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Merle Gordon".

Merle Gordon, Director
Cleveland Department of Public Health